2243

Farm Broadcasters Letter

Letter No. 2243 January 2, 1986

EXPORT CORN FORECAST

As of mid-Dec., the 1985/86 grain trade forecast remains virtually unchanged at 49.1 million tons, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Although corn sales and shipments through mid-Dec. were lagging behind last year's levels, increased import demand from Mexico and Brazil and lower export prospects for Argentina may mean improved prospects for U.S. corn exports. Corn shipments during the 4-week period ending Dec. 12 totaled 4.2 million tons, an 11-pct. increase over the 3.8 million tons shipped out last month. Major destinations included Japan and the Soviet.

WHEAT EXPORT FORECAST

As of mid-December, the U.S. wheat export forecast for June-May 1985/86 remains unchanged at 27.2 million tons, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Wheat shipments in the 4-week period ending Dec. 12 totaled 1.8 million tons, down 8 pct. from last month estimates, while new sales of 1 million tons over the same period were down 38 pct. from last month. Major sales were made to Algeria, Egypt and Iraq.

CANADA AS COMPETITOR

Exports of U.S. wheat, corn and barley in 1985/86 could encounter stronger competition from Canada because of larger-than-expected supplies of Canadian wheat and barley, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The 1985/86 Canadian export estimates for wheat and barley were raised by one million tons for wheat and half a million tons for barley as a result of late-season adjustments in the supply estimate by the Canadian government. Canada is now forecast to export 17.5 million tons of wheat, including large quantities of feed wheat...and 4.5 million tons of barley.

ARGENTINE FLOODS DESTROY WHEAT

U.S. wheat exporters could face less competition from high-quality Argentine wheat because of severe flooding that reportedly destroyed large amounts of wheat, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Argentine wheat export forecast for 1985-86 (Dec.-Nov.) was reduced to 5.6 million tons, compared to 9.4 million tons in 1984/85. The rains are also likely to have an adverse affect on the quality that would add to already large global availabilities of feed-quality wheat, thereby increasing competition for exports of U.S. coarse grains.

NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
FEB 6 1986
U. S. GOVT. PUB
DEPOSITORY 3Z6

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information
Radio-Television Division Phone (202) 447-4330 Washington D.C. 20250

A 21.34:

CANADA-SOVIET GRAIN AGREEMENT

Canada signed a long-term grain agreement with the Soviet for 25 million tons of grain between Aug. 1986 and July 1991, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. When the present agreement expires on July 31, 1986, the Soviets will have taken over 36 million tons of Canadian grain, comprising annual imports of between 5-7 million tons of wheat and 300,000 to 2.3 million tons of barley.

SOVIET SAY U.S. GRAIN IMPROVING

The Soviets believe the 1985 U.S. wheat and corn exports represent substantially better quality grain than was sent to them in 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Formerly the Soviet's number one complaint was insect infestation...now the complaint is excessive moisture in corn and foreign matter in grain shipments. The Russians reported that 25 pct. of U.S. grain imported in 1984 was insect-infested. They also said corn shipments should not contain more than 14.5 pct. moisture to avoid spoilage problems.

RAINS DAMAGE AUSTRALIAN WHEAT

Australia is expected to have large supplies of feed wheat to compete with U.S. feed grains because late rains have damaged the 1985 wheat harvest, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Indications are that as much as 30 pct. of the Australian wheat crop could be downgraded, adding to already abundant supplies of feed wheat overhanging the world market.

HOGS & PIGS INVENTORY DOWN

The U.S. inventory of all hogs and pigs is estimated at 52.3 million head on Dec. 1, 1985, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is 3 pct. below a year ago and 8 pct. less than Dec. 1, 1983. Breeding hog inventory of 6.78 million, is 2 pct. below last year and down 8 pct. from two years ago. Market hog inventory at 45.5 million is 3 pct. below a year ago and 8 pct. below two years ago. The 10 Quarterly States with 41.1 million head on Dec. 1 are down 3 pct. from a year earlier and 7 pct. from Dec. 1, 1983. These 10 states account for approximately 79 pct. of the total U.S. hog and pig inventory.

GRASS AS A SODIUM CLEANER

A grass grown for livestock feed also acts as a soil cleanser that could give crops a chance to grow on millions of acres of salt-laden soil in the West, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A hybrid grass of sorghum and sudangrass releases a high level of carbon dioxide in the soil which frees the sodium so rainfall or irrigation water can leach out sodium normally bound up in the soil. The cleansing takes at least two growing seasons.

NO MORE BRRRRRR FOR BZZZZZZZZZZ

Instead of freezing to death over the winter, honeybees in cold climates can now stay warm and healthy in solar-heated beehives. This is due to a new type of beehive cover developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The covers are box-like structures of translucent plastic that trap infrared rays from the sun. They also help retain heat generated by the bees themselves. In tests, the bee survival rates were nearly 100 pct. In unprotected hives during severe Wisconsin winters, the losses are up to 50 pct.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

OUTLOOK - FEED...Large supplies of feed grains are contributing to price weakness and tightness in available storage. USDA economist David Hull examines the situation and outlook for feed grains for 1986. Vic Powell interviews. (546)

AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK...Net farm income in 1986 is projected to range from $22 to $26 billion, compared with $25 billion in 1985 and $34.5 billion in 1984. USDA economist Herb Moses talks about these and other factors contributing to the current agricultural outlook. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (547)

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK...Lower prices and lower volumes took their toll on U.S. exports during fiscal year 1985, while U.S. agricultural imports set a record of $19.7 billion, up $820 million from 1984's level. UDSA economist Steve MacDonald discusses agricultural trade situation. Vic Powell interviews. (548)

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE - I...USDA economist Stephen Sposato discusses the purpose of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade or GATT, and its importance to the U.S. Vic Powell interviews. (549)

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE - II...USDA economist Stephen Sposato continues his discussion on the importance of GATT to U.S. agriculture, including the upcoming round of GATT talks in 1986 to take action on trade problems. Vic Powell interviews. (550)

Food & Fitness
An Everyday Event

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1492...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) If you ski or ever thought about it, George Holmes has a story that may make you think twice. It's a story about avalanches...predicting them and surviving them.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1781...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Ag trade balance falls; Gloom for feed grain producers?; FmHA deliquent borrowers to get special mailing; USDA to get animal damage control program from Interior Department.

CONSUMER TIME #974...(Weekly reel of five 2½-3 min features) Youth suicide increase; Quick clean ups; Smart Japanese kids; A soynut butter sandwich?; Bear bites.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Fri, Jan. 10, U.S. crop prod., World oilseed situation, World grain situation; Tues, Jan. 14, Crop and weather update; Wed, Jan. 15, Milk production; Thurs, Jan. 16, World tobacco situation; Fri, Jan. 17, World coffee situation. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

OFF MIKE

USDA Radio and Televison reached a new pinnacle December 23. That's the day when President Reagan joined Sec'y of Agric John Block in the USDA television studio for a special Satellite Television Press Conference immediately following President Reagan's signing of the Farm Bill. Lots of media attention. We tried to get as many farm broadcasters involved as possible, and if we missed you, we apologize. The event went up on three satellite feeds: one for television and two for radio. We thank Bill Ray (Agrinet Farm Net, Richmond, VA) and Mark Vail (Kansas Ag Net, Topeka, KS) for uplinking it live and letting us give out the information that others needed for downlinking ... John Weir is holding down the fort at KBUR, Burlington, IA, while Cletus Paul continues to recuperate from his fall at the NAFB Kansas City meeting ... Thruston Doan (Agri-Radio Net, Little Rock, AR) reports that Kathleen Lonergan will join his staff in about three weeks. Kathleen interned with USDA Radio this past summer and with Jerry Passer (WMT, Cedar Rapids, IA) previously ... Bob Bosold (WAXX, Eau Clair, WI) reports one of those "wouldn't you know it" hunting stories. He took a first year hunter out, put him in a stand, said "Stay put." He did and, you guessed it, bagged a 9-point buck. Bob didn't. He caught the flu bug instead ... Speaking of deer, Jim Mills (NAFB Sales/Marketing Director, Herndon, VA) bagged two deer...one with his truck ("He committed suicide," Jim said) and the other the more conventional way, with a rifle (although Jim's been known to make do with a bow and arrow) ... Opened up the "Ag Forum" publication from the University of Nevada Reno and there was an picture of alumnus Bill Helming (The Helming Reports, Overland Park, KS) along with an article he wrote entitled, "Back to the Future." Interesting reading ... Fich Hawkins (KRVN, Lexington, NB) reports his station is running a series on "Agriculture in the Holy Land" which he produced from materials he gathered while in Israel for 11 days recently ... Reminder: If you have an electronic mail box, let us know. We'll send you our listing of daily news stories.

JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief, Radio-Television Division

Farm Broadcasters Letter
Radio and Television, Rm. 410-A
Office of Information, OGPA
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use, $300

POSTAGE & FEES PAID
US Dept of Agriculture
AGR-101

244

Farm Broadcasters Letter

MAR 21 1986
U. S. GOVT. PUBS.
DEPOSITORY 376

Letter No. 2244 January 9, 1986

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL IN EC

Spain and Portugal became members of the European Community as of Jan. 1. They now have to adopt the customs duties and agricultural policies of the Community. Most of these changes will be phased in over a 7 to 10-year transition period. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the most immediate impact for the U.S. agricultural exports will result from the application of the EC's variable levy system on grain imports by Spain and Portugal, beginning March 1, 1986.

U.S. EXPORTS TO BULGARIA

The total Bulgarian purchases of U.S. agricultural products this year may reach $50 million, double the 1985 level and the highest since 1982, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The higher level of imports reflects Bulgarian production reduced by drought, particularly last year. For the first time since 1979, Bulgaria has borrowed from Western banks to finance purchases of grain. Bulgaria purchased 141,000 metric tons of U.S. corn in the first three months of fiscal 1986 and another 160,000 tons were sold for future delivery.

EC's GRAIN AND FEED

The European Community's (EC) wheat and flour export licenses through mid-Dec. totaled 8.8 million tons, 2.3 million tons ahead of the previous year's record volume, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The EC's aggressive posture may not only reflect attempts to compete with U.S. export programs, but may also indicate efforts to reduce burdensome stocks.

AUSTRALIAN RAINS

Late rains may have damaged the 1985 Australian wheat harvest, causing as much as 2.5 million tons to be downgraded to feed-quality, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Abundant feed wheat supplies are not expected to change Australia's total wheat export forecast. However, this would add to the already large supplies of feed wheat overhanging the world market.

HIGH ON THE HOG

On Dec. 3, a shipment of 1,950 breeding hogs was sent from the United States to China. This sale had a value of more than $2 million and, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, constitutes the single largest export shipment of U.S. hogs in history. This is only proper since roast pig originated in China--or so the legend goes.

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information
Radio-Television Division Phone (202) 447-4330 Washington D.C. 20250

21.37:

5.75 MILLION DOWN ON THE FARM

Approximately 5 million, 750 thousand people lived on U.S. farms in 1984, about 33,000 less than in 1983, reports the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The decline is not significant and may be due to statistical sampling errors. About 1 of every 41 persons, or 2.4 pct. of the Nation's population, lived on a farm in 1984. The Midwest has the largest share with 44 pct. The South ranked second with 36 pct., followed by the West with 15 pct. and the Northeast with 6 pct. The median age of farm residents was 35½ years. For nonfarm residents, it's 31 years.

FARM FAMILY INCOME

Farm families generally have lower incomes than those elsewhere. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, their median income of $18,925 in 1983 was three-fourths of the nonfarm median of $24,751. Nearly 21 pct. of all farm families had incomes below the poverty level, compared with 12 pct. for nonfarm families. These estimates are based on money income alone and do not include the value of noncash benefits. Sixty-two pct. of farm men worked in agriculture while 71 pct. of farm women had nonagricultural jobs. (For more details, call Judith Kalbacher, 202-786-1534.)

EMERGENCY FEED

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block announced today that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service will be moving approved Commodity Credit Corporation-owned grain into areas eligible for ASCS's Emergency Feed Assistance program. According to Block, "A combination of an unusually dry summer plus grasshopper infestation drastically reduced summer grass and sharply cut production of winter forage. Then, one of the earliest and most severe winters on record has caused further hardship." Areas designated to date as eligible include portions of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming. Grain will be made available as soon as possible to eligible producers.

IMPROVED DIETS

American women and their young children consume less fat and more carbohydrate today than when surveyed in 1977, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These changes conform to recommendations in the 1980 first edition of Dietary Guidelines for Americans, as well as the 1985 second edition, both published by the USDA. In 1985, women reported diets that provided 37 pct. of total calories from fat--down from 41 pct. in 1977.... And 46 pct. of total calories from carbohydrate, up from 41 pct. in 1977. Total calories consumed rose six pct. since 1977.

PRICES RECEIVED INDEX UP

The December Index of Prices Received by Farmers for All Farm Products increased one point (0.8 pct.) from November to 128 pct. of its Jan.-Dec. 1977 average, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Higher prices for lettuce, hogs, corn, tomatoes and soybeans were partially offset by lower prices for oranges, broilers, cotton, lemons and wheat. The index was 7 points (5.2 pct.) below a year ago.

CCC INTEREST RATE - 7-3/4%

The commodity loans disbursed in Jan. by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 7-3/4 pct. interest rate. The new rate is down from 7-7/8 pct.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

SECRETARY JOHN BLOCK RESIGNS...Secretary of Agriculture John Block recently submitted his resignation of the cabinet office to President Reagan and in this interview he reviews his five-year tenure as Secretary of Agriculture with his major objective being to secure passage of the new farm bill. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (551)

FOOD SECURITY ACT OF 1985 - I...USDA analyst Tom Fulton examines those portions of the 1985 Farm Bill that pertain to exports, including the Export Bonus program, PL-480 and the cargo preference issue. Vic Powell interviews. (552)

FOOD SECURITY ACT OF 1985 - II...USDA analyst Tom Fulton continues his discussion of the 1985 Farm Bill, focusing on the Conservation Reserve portion of the bill and how it affects the farmer. Vic Powell interviews. (553)

FARM CENSUS REPORT UPDATE...The U.S. Census Bureau will conduct nationwide test in the following months to strive for the clearest and least burdensome form to use in the 1987 Census of Agriculture. Bud Pautler, Bureau of the Census, talks about this test and how it will be used. Jim Johnson interviews. (554)

GENETIC ENGINEERING RESEARCH...Jack Widholm, University of Illinois, describes research taking place at the University of Illinois to unlock the secrets of the genetic make-up of crop plants. Gary Beaumont interviews. (555)

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1492...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) On January 7, 1986, Secretary of Agriculture John Block announced his resignation. On this edition of Agriculture USA, Brenda Curtis takes a look at the history of events during his time in office.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1782...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Prevention of erodible land cultivation, Emergency feed assistance program; Secretry Block resigns from USDA cabinet post; Soviet grain complaints.

CONSUMER TIME #975...(Weekly reel of news features) Starting an avalanche; No-no to spray waxes; The price of beef; Healthy teenage girls; Swearing off junk foods.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Wed, Jan. 15, Milk production; Tues, Jan. 21, Catfish, Weekly crop and weather report; Fri, Jan. 24, Cattle on feed, Livestock slaughter. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

OFF MIKE

Two powerful media events in just over two weeks makes for interesting times. President Reagan's visit to USDA to participate in one of our Satellite Television Press Conferences with Secretary Block was a first and created considerable media attention before, during and after. Then this week Sec'y Block announced his resignation at a regular press conference. We tried to get as many farm broadcasters involved as possible, and we apologize for not getting everyone on ... Thruston Doan (Agri Radio Net, Little Rock, AR) reports that Kathleen Lonergan will be joining his staff toward the end of the month ... Glen James joined the Progressive Farmer Network staff in Starkville, MS, replacing Jeff Wilson who left to work in an agribusiness industry ... Greg Chance (Arkansas State Univ, Jonesboro, AR) won the broadcast division of Arkansas Farm Bureau's "Tell the Farming Story" competition. Our congratulations!! ... Not so long ago we relayed a story about Krit Stubblefield (Kentucky Agri-Net, Louisville, KY) taking on the role of tour guide when a group of out-of-staters were busing about the state and learning about crops Krit knew about but they didn't. As it turns out, a Texan read about Krit's tour episode and called him for advice on a tour he (the Texan) is setting up. We always figured Krit would find his niche in life ... Speaking of awards, Ed Slusarczyk (WTLB/Ag Radio Net, Utica NY) recently presented awards to nine winners in the 1985-86 Northeast Chapter of NAMA media awards. Ed serves as the chapter vice-president and awards committee chairman ... Also speaking of awards, Fortunato "Lucky" Teho (Radio/TV specialist emeritus, Univ of Hawaii) received the annual community service award from the Hawaii Island Media Advisory Council recently. Again our congratulations!! ... Jerry Urdahl is now with Minnesota Farm Radio ... Mike Hergert, formerly with KCMT, Alexandria, MN, is now with the Minnesota Corn Growers Assoc.

Jim Johnson

JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief, Radio and Television Division

Farm Broadcasters Letter
Radio and Television, Rm. 410-A
Office of Information, OGPA
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use, $300

POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S.Dept. of Agriculture
AGR-101